We Don't Need To Heal

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We Don't Need To Heal

by stranded_labyrinth

Summary

Tired of wasting resources dealing with a horrific Omega criminal who is definitely not insane, the BSHCI and the FBI decide that the best course of action is to have him mated to an Alpha who can keep him under control. Find an Alpha for the job, and Hannibal Lecter can be out of their hands for good.

Will Graham enters the BSCHI, believing himself to have been selected to interview the notorious killer about a cold case that has recently been attributed to him. What he finds instead will change their lives forever, and leave him wracked with guilt.

Hannibal, on the other hand, could not be more satisfied with how things panned out for them both.

Notes

hello!!

i just wanted to clarify something about how this fic goes, because it might read as more extreme than it is: this story is definitely dubcon, but also enthusiastic consent. it may read as more severe because it's in Will's POV, and he as an Alpha is terrified of harming an Omega with his rut, so there's a lot of hesitance. the aforementioned Omega is completely fine, he's doing great actually LOL

enjoy! :]

(and a HUGE thank you to sainthannibal for betaing!!)

As far as anyone could tell, and as far as he himself knew, Will was not an aggressive Alpha.

He couldn't keep track of the amount of times somebody had met him with the expectation that he was an Omega, only to be surprised, confused, or even *upset* that he was an Alpha. All because his personality had been described to them and their biases took the helm once it was clear that he was seemingly harmless.

Then there were the Alphas who felt the need to prove their dominance to everyone around them. Will had never understood that. There was no point in unnecessary aggression that would do nothing but convince everyone in the vicinity that you're an asshole. And yet, there were always those Alphas out there; Alphas who were thoroughly *convinced* that their dominance existed solely because of their Alpha status, and therefore felt that their dominance was being threatened when there was an Alpha who was less domineering.

After all, if an Alpha can exist without inherent dominance, then that meant that Alphas did not *have* inherent dominance. Will being less prone to growling, snarling, or otherwise snapping at other Alphas meant that dominance was a personality trait rather than an Alphan trait, and thus they had less of an excuse for their behavior.

That wasn't to say that Will couldn't be aggressive in his *own* manner. As a matter of fact, he delighted in seeing another Alpha's forehead veins bulge when they would growl at him and he would simply ask, "Why are you angry?" He discovered relatively soon after his presentation that, when it came down to it, Alphas often acted aggressively because they were told that that's what Alphas do, and therefore an Alpha having to actually *explain* why they were acting aggressively was completely embarrassing.

Then again…he'd also had plenty of instances where he couldn't tell that another Alpha was trying to be aggressive at all.

An Alpha would crowd him, chest puffed and fangs bared, and Will would simply think that this was an individual who didn't understand the concept of personal space. With the lack of reaction from Will, or a very polite request for them to step back, anyone else in the room would deem the other Alpha ridiculously aggressive in comparison, and they would be humiliated into stopping their– quite frankly– *childish* behavior.

As far as non-Alphas went, he was met with some mixed results.

He wasn't exactly inserting himself into the dating pool, but as was the nature of being human, attention could be garnered anyway. Once, he'd encountered an Omega he needed to interact with for work purposes, who very directly informed him that they could simply *never* be with an Alpha who didn't seem protective enough. They seemed confused when Will ignored the statement and kept the subject to the lesson plans for Quantico's students. Then there was an Omega who tried to scent him within minutes of meeting him, thinking that his demeanor was somehow an attempt at flirting. That one baffled him just as much as the first, considering he was being civil at best.

Truth be told, nobody really knew what to do with him.

Calm, yet simultaneously jittery. Polite, yet simultaneously blunt. Shy in most regards, yet powerfully confident with things others weren't. Completely obtuse when someone dropped hints, yet bashful and shocked when someone was more forward (which isn't to say that either happened very often). He seemed to be a fantastic potential housemate, yet nobody was exactly head over heels ready to bond.

He was fine with that. To a certain extent, he preferred it that way. As much as he would love the classic American dream of settling down with someone, he knew he wasn't exactly the type most would go for. Mating an Omega came with too much societal pressure he couldn't fit into, settling down with a Beta would subject them to his potential ruts, and ending up with another Alpha would likely be disastrous, resulting in constant fighting or even potential attempts at "bitching". With that in mind, he'd stopped having hope for a mate long ago, and that wasn't something that was likely to change.

And yet, his aloof demeanor for an Alpha could have some benefits to it. Primarily work-related.

He was often called in when someone needed to be sure an Alpha on hand wouldn't become aggressive in a particular situation, or overuse Commands, or any other reason they could come up with for why another Alpha wouldn't be great to bring in. The bias of an Alpha being "in charge" mixed with his more rational approach could do wonders, depending on the situation.

He imagined that was why he got his current assignment.

In a similar vein to how being a more “chill” Alpha tended to baffle people, being a violent Omega left the general public shocked and appalled. Omegas were always viewed as such docile things, even in modern society, that nobody seemed to know how to handle the news of one who became violent. Certain crimes always seemed to be related to certain statuses, with violent crimes always being seen as something an Alpha would do. Even if an Omega was murderous, they were always associated with poisonings and smotherings, not butcherings.

Perhaps that was why the story of the Chesapeake Ripper had become so much more popularly known than the Minnesota Shrike. An Alpha who hunted and tore people apart to consume their flesh was horrible, yet eerily expected. An Omega doing the same thing sent chills through people’s spines.

“Like a horror movie trope,” Beverly had once joked about the case.

The Omega in question, by all accounts, nearly seemed to behave more like an Alpha than an Omega. Not due to any attempts to hide his status, nor due to any outward displays of aggression, but simply due to the way he carried himself, the unquestionable confidence that he exuded. Some even said that his scenting abilities matched that of an Alpha, and perhaps that had also been enough to throw some people off.

Accounts from those who knew him personally suggested that he was almost overly polite, having a particular distaste for discourtesy and thus doing almost everything in his power to keep his interactions pristine. If anything, he tended to use his Omegan Calming if the situation seemed to call for it. He was social, overtly so, and yet he never seemed keen on settling down with anyone in particular, far too independent to find a mate.

Nobody seemed to press the topic, given his confidence in his independence. Will assumed that if there was anybody who *had* pressed, they likely weren’t alive anymore.

Of course, being an unmated Omega kept attention on him, and it was the sort of attention that a serial killer would not be very enthused about maintaining. Especially not around the time that suspicion was coming knocking on his doorstep, inquiring about particular connections.

And thus came his alibi in the form of a local Beta, Dr. Alana Bloom.

It was slightly difficult for Will to imagine it, and not only because he himself had been briefly interested in her. She came out of the situation a different person, hardened and jaded in a way Will could have never anticipated from her. Her typical friendliness was replaced with the rigid politeness of someone in a white collar position, her smiles forced and her eyes colder. Even her more negative traits had shifted, her savior complex twisting into a much darker need for justice.

That justice, as of right now, came in the form of her presiding over the BSHCI, where Omegan serial killer Dr. Hannibal Lecter has been for the past three years.

Granted, that was due to the fact that there were two people in existence who knew about Alana's personal involvement in Dr. Lecter's life, and those were Jack Crawford and Will Graham himself.

Truth be told, Will hadn't spoken to her in a couple years before he got this assignment. He'd tried after everything, he really did, but the 180 degree turn her personality had taken made his skin crawl, as though he was talking to a stranger who was speaking with the familiarity of a friend. It was eerie, and after a few sparse interactions, he'd stopped reaching out entirely. After the incident, she'd stopped being the first to reach out anyway.

This was their first time speaking since, and it was in the halls of the BSHCI, handing her his assignment folder while Jack stood beside them.

As she led them down the hall, she kept herself side by side with Will, while Jack trailed behind them. It was…odd, watching him do that. Will couldn't help glancing over his shoulder occasionally, as though unsure that Jack was even still there. Jack never lagged behind with anything. Why now?

"Jack trusts you to put on your big boy pants today," Alana joked, glancing behind her as she handed the folder off back to Will.

Will gave a wry smile, something brief and almost self-deprecative in nature.

“Yet he doesn’t actually tell me why I’m the man for the job.”

“Dr. Lecter responds better to courtesy than to displays of dominance,” Alana explained. “If we sent someone in there who would try to Command him into submission, they’d be pulling their hair out trying to get anything out of him. He’s far more likely to be appreciative of how you go about things.”

Will nodded then, pressing his lips into a fine line. Once again, his demeanor was deemed *useful* . For an interview with a serial killer, of all things.

Dr. Hannibal Lecter was committed to the BSHCI with four counts of homicide, and that wasn’t even mentioning the fact that he’d *eaten* portions of his victims. The fact was, Jack Crawford (along with most other people) had a feeling that Lecter had more victims who had remained undiscovered.

The displayed corpse of one had been found two days ago. Yes, the display was over three years old.

Thus, Will was being sent in for an interview with him. Ask Lecter about the body, about the victim, see if he can get a confession. If he does, adding it to Lecter’s body count will be far easier, and make any court processes far shorter.

Will nearly laughed, more to himself than anything, realizing why he was really there. It wasn’t about whether or not someone else could get an answer out of the man. It was about streamlining the process.

Useful .

“You won’t be in his usual cell,” Alana explained. “If he feels others are watching, he’ll try to put on a little show. He entertains himself like that. Can’t let him peacock. You two are gonna be in a more confined room on your own. Don’t worry, he wouldn’t try to kill you.”

Will blinked, slightly perplexed by such a casual explanation, though it was the last bit that had him worried.

"Aren't the patients usually restrained?" he asked.

"Usually," Alana said, unable to hide her smirk. "He'll have his mask and straitjacket, but he won't be tied down. Either way, I think you can handle him."

He tried not to audibly sigh or groan, the rest of her thought process having gone unsaid but still understood.

You are *an Alpha, after all. You can handle an Omega.*

He tried to ignore the way she sent an amused glance back at Jack. He very often found himself standing just outside of a joke he wasn't in on, no matter who he was around, but that didn't make it any less irritating.

That, and if there had been a big enough issue to make a stink out of it, Jack himself would have said something. Maybe Will had misinterpreted, then. Jack didn't exactly find submissive Omega jokes very funny, and he wouldn't be so quiet if that had been what she meant.

Alana led them down a small hallway, before finally coming to a halt outside of a particular door.

"I'd give you the full rundown, but I think you know how to behave," she said with a smile. Even so, it felt as though she was still amused by something he couldn't grasp.

He looked at her.

You're almost specially designed for this. An Alpha he can't anticipate. Your unpredictability will baffle him. You can humiliate him in ways he wouldn't allow another Alpha to even get close to doing.

I want him humiliated. It's the indignity he deserves.

He looked away, blinking as his jaw twitched. Overwhelmed. He took the file back from her outstretched hand.

"Will," Jack said, speaking for the first time since they'd entered. It made Will nearly jump, having gotten accustomed to his peculiar quietness that day.

Jack clapped a hand on his shoulder, looking at him almost with…remorse.

"Be careful in there," he said.

Will nodded, finally placing his hand on the door before looking at Alana.

He wanted to speak, he wanted to say nothing at all. There was so much he could say, and yet there wasn't enough.

"I…hope you're able to heal better than this," he found himself saying.

"I will," she assured him, far too quickly for his comfort. "Now go on. He's waiting for you."

Of course, the door didn't lead immediately to the room.

He was set on a course down another small hallway, to a black door with two armed guards. He expected them to be stern, likely not very thrilled about having to be there, much less having to deal with any potential blowout from Will being sent in with an only half restrained serial killer.

But they didn't. They, too, looked at him with a sort of guilt in their eyes he couldn't discern, just like Jack had.

They said nothing as one guard finally unlocked the door with a shake of his head, opening it to allow Will entrance.

Or…apparently, to allow an orderly to exit.

The orderly grinned at him, an expression that felt mostly like a baring of fangs, his leering gaze something that nearly made Will shiver. Will lowered his eyes, hoping to avoid conflict, only to be met with a low laugh as the orderly stopped altogether.

"Hey," the other Alpha drawled, "seems like you have your work cut out for you."

"I'm aware of what I'm getting into," Will said, lifting his head without moving his eyes.

"Are you?" the orderly asked, a question that Will had assumed would be malicious in nature, and yet came off completely fine, almost curious. "Nasty work for you in there."

"I can assure you I've likely had worse experiences with killers," Will said, finally turning his head and opting to look at the orderly's eyebrow, something close enough to meeting his gaze to be tolerable.

The orderly grinned again, seeming very entertained by this. “I can imagine…Will Graham, the one who understands them all.”

Will’s brows furrowed then, an uneasy wave of confusion washing over him. “I’m…sorry, do I know you?”

“You could,” the orderly answered, and it sounded like a promise. “I’m Matthew. Big fan of your work…Unsung hero type shit.”

In his puzzlement, Will hadn't taken notice, but when his focus returned to Matthew’s face he nearly gasped, taking a step back. Matthew had stepped into his space beyond what anyone normally wanted to without some kind of issue.

Matthew, clocking Will’s unease, took a little step back, putting his hands up as if in surrender. “Hey, I’m not being sarcastic. I mean it. And listen…It just saddens me to see a guy like you stuck with an Omega like that.”

If Will was confused before, he was *baffled* now. “It’s an interview, uh…Matthew.”

Matthew laughed low again, as though Will had told him some kind of joke. “Right…Listen, man, it’s just…There’s so much potential for you, you know? You understand everyone, but you need someone who understands *you* . Hawks fly solo, and that’s their weakness.”

Will blinked, his eyes finally meeting Matthew’s before darting away, overwhelmed by the absolute *hunger* he found there.

“I…excuse me, I have work to do.”

“Hey, man,” Matthew said with a grin. “Two Alphas ain’t as bad as it sounds.”

“ *Goodbye* , Matthew,” Will said tersely, hoping he put enough agitation in it to mask his discomfort as he made his way down the rest of the hall and into the opened door.

His first impression was not the room, nor the metal desk with two metal chairs, nor the oddly placed twin size prison bed in the back corner, nor did his eyes even meet the only other person contained in the room with him. His first impression, one that made the hair on his neck stand on end, was hearing the lock clicking behind him.

He was locked in.

“I believe the lock is more about me than it is about you.”

Will’s nerves dropped *immediately* , in a way that made him feel fuzzy, his anxiety dissipating at the sound of the voice behind him.

Omegan Calming.

“You don’t need to do that,” Will said, still not having turned away from the door.

“Perhaps not. Even still,” the man behind him continued, the Calming not leaving his voice, “I’ve found it helps–”

“ ***Stop that.*** ”

He’d turned at last, issuing the Command face to face. His irritated eyes met vaguely surprised ones, ones that were a soft brown in the light, before instantly moving away.

Will swallowed, trying to come back to himself.

"I'm– Sorry, I didn't mean t– That was…unnecessary."

"There's no need for shame of your instincts in this room, I assure you," the inmate promised, sitting somehow taller in his seat. And yet, his Calming was gone. Either the Command had worked, or he'd stopped of his own accord. Possibly both. In any case, he didn't seem upset at all about the Command.

"Dr. Lecter responds better to courtesy than to displays of dominance ," Alana had told him. Perhaps, then, it wasn't about the Command, but about the apology that came afterward.

"Not fond of eye contact, are you?" the inmate asked with a tilt of his head, distracting Will from his thoughts and elevating his eyes from the floor to the killer's mask.

"Eyes are distracting," Will said, finally beginning to make his way to the only table in the room. "You see too much, you don't see enough. Hard to focus on a conversation when you're too busy thinking, 'Those whites are *really* white', or 'Oh, is that a burst blood vessel?' or 'Does he have hepatitis?'."

Realizing then how agitated he was starting to sound already, he glanced downward again, opting to focus on the file as he set it on the table.

When the silence afterward became overwhelming, he looked up, trying to discern what had made the seemingly talkative criminal go quiet.

Dr. Lecter was looking at him with keen interest.

"I imagine what you see and learn touches everything else in your mind," he began. "Your values and decency are present yet shocked at your associations, appalled at your dreams. No

forts in the bone arena of your skull for things you love. Tell me, do the connections your mind makes to violent killers tend to cross wires with your distaste for Alphan aggression?"

Will blinked, his *distaste* apparent on his face.

"Don't psychoanalyze me," he said. "We're not here to build my profile."

"No," Lecter agreed. "Indeed we are not."

His tone was difficult to place. Another inside joke Will wasn't a part of. The killer didn't look particularly amused by it, though, unlike Alana had been. He didn't seem upset in any way either; he was simply acknowledging something, something Will didn't know about.

"Have I lost you already?" Dr. Lecter asked, tilting his head again.

Will huffed. "No. Just thinking. But again, this isn't about me."

"If not you, what is this about?"

"Andrew Caldwell," Will said, holding up the image of his desecrated corpse. "A phlebotomist whose blood was completely drained from him."

The man in the photo was almost entirely gone, and what remained was horrifyingly pale, a shriveled husk of what he used to be. The Chesapeake Ripper had apparently tried his hand at homemade jerky.

"An almost fitting death," the criminal said, as though they'd agreed on something. "Or simply ironic."

“They want me to ask you if it was you,” Will said, his expression hardening. “I already know that it was.”

Lecter lifted his chin, likely smiling beneath that mask if the crinkling by his eyes meant anything. “Elaborate, if you would please.”

“You take organs from the bodies of people you feel no longer deserve them,” Will went on. “You took his blood because he didn’t deserve it anymore. He was *your* phlebotomist, wasn’t he? A private practitioner, perfect for someone who doesn’t want their private information mixed in with the records of lesser beings. Someone whose services you appreciated, until he revealed himself to be a *pig* .” Will practically spat the final word, his expression somehow hardening further.

Lecter, on the other hand, was looking at him as though he’d just witnessed fireworks for the first time.

“Yes, he was,” he agreed, his voice softer than it was before. “And yes, he did.”

“He was tasteless,” Will said.

“Indeed,” Lecter agreed, his tone light. He probably thought Will meant it literally, didn’t he? A little joke about Dr. Lecter’s *tastes* ? “Do you often have trouble with taste?”

“My thoughts are not often *tasty* ,” Will said with a twist of his mouth, “but you already know that now, don’t you?”

A nod in reply. A point conceded.

Will sat still, as still as Lecter sat, one breath coming after another. There wasn’t much of a point in him being there anymore, considering he’d technically gotten the confession, in a way. And yet there was something– nagging in the back of his head, an itch he hadn’t yet scratched– that prevented him from so much as getting out of his seat.

He set the picture down.

"Why did you try to *calm* me when I came in?" he asked.

Lecter's eyes raked over him, as though trying to get a read on what he was seeing. "The door was open when you had your encounter with my nurse. I was hoping to ensure that his behavior would not negatively impede on our conversation."

Will gave a little nod, leaning back in his seat. It was an acceptable enough answer, and he definitely didn't seem to be lying. Dr. Lecter seemed to have a penchant for conversation, even where it didn't fit, so it made perfect sense that he would be a bit miffed that someone interrupted.

Even if it was his own nurse…

"Tell me, do the connections your mind makes to violent killers tend to cross wires with your distaste for Alphan aggression?"

"There's so much potential for you, you know? You understand everyone, but you need someone who understands you. Hawks fly solo, and that's their weakness."

Will's eyes shot directly into Dr. Lecter's, his breathing becoming slightly unsteady.

"...How long have you known that your nurse was a killer?"

Dr. Lecter smiled, evident by the creases near his eyes.

Even so, for some reason, he shifted a bit in his seat. Will was struck by the movement, if only because Dr. Lecter hadn't given the slightest notion of seeming uncomfortable at *all*

prior to the shift, as he'd been almost horrifyingly still. It was jarring, in a way, but Will wasn't going to bring attention to it.

"Quite some time," Hannibal answered, apparently also electing to ignore his discomfort. "He's not very good at hiding it, he simply has the advantage of being where nobody thinks to look. Why would a murderer work at this facility, caring for other murderers?"

Will nodded, the comprehension coming fast. It was a horrific hiding spot, and yet somehow, possibly, one of the best. A predator hiding in plain sight, in a position nobody really even thought about, let alone looked into.

Will took a breath, the air in the room seeming more… *pleasant* , than it was before.

The clinical scent of the hospital they were in, intermingled with the metallic scent of the furniture, was outweighed at last. He took another inhale, welcoming the woodsy, earthy scents his breath brought to him.

For the first time all day, he felt something close to content. Granted, he didn't know *why* the scent was so strong, and…steadily getting…stronger? It was–

Oh . Oh that was an Omega scent, wasn't it?

Confused, his eyes met the face of the Omega he was seated across from, who was staring at him as though anticipating his next move. Dr. Lecter's arms were restrained, yet the scent was potent. When would he have been able to reach his scent glands to–?

A sweet scent hit Will's nose at last, and his brows furrowed.

"Are you–?" His eyes went wide. " *Shit* , are you–?"

He shot out of his seat, gunning it for the door. He jostled the handle, only to discover that it was still well and truly locked. He banged his fist against the door, trying to peer through the

tiny window the door had.

As he did so, he discovered that there was absolutely no one on the other side of the door. Not an orderly nor guard in sight. They were completely alone.

The scent was getting stronger, causing his focus to waver. His hand came over his mouth, as though it could somehow remedy the ache that started in his fangs. He looked to Dr. Lecter, mortified, as even the most seemingly composed man in the world was beginning to succumb to his body's whims, the prisoner's breathing becoming heavier, his eyes half lidded with lust.

"They're not letting either of us out of here, Will," Dr. Lecter said, his voice heavier, *sultrier* than it was before.

"That–" Will tried to speak, only to find the scent entering his lungs even faster that way. "No, they couldn't– We'll…What if I…?"

"I'd suspected it by the way you spoke of this encounter," Dr. Lecter went on, leaning back in his seat, legs spreading wider even as he strained to maintain some semblance of control over himself, "but I hadn't known for sure until now. They didn't inform you of their little plan, did they?"

Plan?

Will didn't even dare to speak his confusion aloud, his hands clamped over his nose and mouth, as though he could somehow filter out the scent of Omegan heat. What sort of plan could have been concocted by locking him in a room with an Omega about to go into heat? What would anybody gain, except for–

…for the Alpha in the room to, in fact, go into rut. For him to lose control, attack the prisoner he was meant to "interview". For Dr. Lecter to be humiliated in the only way they hadn't yet tried.

“You two are gonna be in a more confined room on your own. Don’t worry, he wouldn’t try to kill you.”

“He’ll have his mask and straitjacket, but he won’t be tied down. Either way, I think you can handle him.”

“Be careful in there.”

“It just saddens me to see a guy like you stuck with an Omega like that. ”

Realization dawned on him, akin to having molten glass poured over his skin, that this was indeed *planned* . From the insistence that it be his sort of Alpha to conduct this “interview”, to the inside jokes he never seemed to be a part of, to the fact that the room had a *bed* . It was all there.

He was Jack and Alana’s final revenge on The Chesapeake Ripper.

Him .

Will turned away, pressing into the wall with his hands clamped over his nose and mouth, his eyes screwed shut. He couldn’t do this. That– That was still a *human being* . That was a *person* .

A person whose heat was, very rapidly, kickstarting his rut.

Alana’s nearly visible thoughts from earlier flooded back into his head.

You’re almost specially designed for this. An Alpha he can’t anticipate. Your unpredictability will baffle him. You can humiliate him in ways he wouldn’t allow another Alpha to even get close to doing.

I want him humiliated. It's the indignity he deserves .

Dr. Lecter was a killer. Only half restrained, because an Alpha in rut would never be able to manage to unlock everything, and yet as he was half restrained, he would kill any Alpha that dared to touch him.

But not Will. Not someone like him. Not someone who *intrigued* him.

Even with his eyes clamped so firmly shut, he couldn't prevent the tears that began to form. What had he ever done to be thrown into this? Was he really just an opportunity for them? Was he that disposable?

Was he so disposable that they would risk him being mated to a serial killer?

…Was *that* the plan?

As his control began to waver, he could hear some vague sounds of a body against metal furniture, followed by the thud of a body hitting the floor.

The Omega was trying to *crawl* to him.

" *Will* ," the Omega called from the floor, his tone nothing short of desperate, his composure completely eradicated in the face of nature. "Alpha…"

"There's no need for shame of your instincts in this room, I assure you."

"I'd suspected it by the way you spoke of this encounter, but I hadn't known for sure until now. They didn't inform you of their plan, did they?"

“I believe the lock is more about me than it is about you.”

“We’re not here to build my profile.” “No, indeed we are not.”

Oh…Oh, God…

Will curled up tighter against the wall, feeling his tears begin to fall on his thumbs, running down and wetting his nails. Nobody had told him that this would happen, but they told their prisoner. They made sure he knew all about his own dehumanization before it would happen.

The prisoner, who had used his Omegan Calming on Will the moment he entered the room, because Will had shown up agitated.

God , he was such a fucking idiot. And now his control was faltering, the urge to take the Omega to that bed in the back growing stronger, even as his mind screamed against it. All he could smell was the sickly scent of heat, and the sweet scent of slick, coming closer, and closer, and–

He felt a nudge on his leg and flinched with a gasp, his eyes shooting open before he clamped them back shut. If he saw the doctor in this state, he didn’t know what he would do. Dr. Lecter may be dangerous, he may have taken countless lives, but that didn’t mean Will had to stoop to horrendous acts as well. He didn’t want to *hurt* him. No human being deserved *this* .

The Omega’s heat, however, directed the prisoner to other plans.

The head that nudged his leg did so a second time, more insistent now. No, *no* , he didn’t want to do this to him, he was a good man who took care of his ruts the way good Alphas do and he didn’t *hurt* anybody and–

The Omega *whimpered* , and all hope was lost.

Will unfurled himself from the ball he'd curled into, his eyes snapping open as he grabbed the straitjacket that kept the Omega restrained. He stood, hauling the Omega up and across the room with him, practically tossing him onto the bed.

He wanted to be more gentle. He really did. He promised himself that he did.

His Alphan brain was in overdrive, and he didn't even bother removing any of the existing restraints. The moment the Omega he was hovering over began to spread his legs, the Alpha grabbed the seams of the grey jumpsuit and *ripped* .

Some quiet, pleased sound from the Omega reached his ears. Apparently, he liked that.

No, he didn't. He's in heat. It's a display of Alpha strength. It's a sign that you're getting closer to–

Will ignored his own futile attempts at rationalizing, opting instead to push the Omega further up the bed and crouch between his bent legs, getting a solid look at what he was craving so badly.

The Omega's cunt was almost visibly throbbing, the large clit pulsing with need. The entire vulva was glistening with slick, which was still pouring out of him and onto the mattress.

Will grabbed the Omega's hips, leaned in, and licked a stripe between the folds to get a taste.

The Omega beneath him practically *mewled* , his hips moving to chase the Alpha's tongue, but were trapped beneath the Alpha's hard grip.

Will couldn't stop himself, tasting that honeyed glaze on his tongue that made him let out a low growl of appreciation. He dove back in, lapping at the slick that oozed from the twitching hole, already starting to ravish it with his tongue.

The Omega writhed beneath him, whining behind his thick mask, his feverish body trying desperately to chase the tongue that would never be enough to sate it.

Will, with all of the rationality he still had before his rut could *completely* take over, figured that if this was going to happen, he could at least do his part to make it not suck as much.

He licked hard and deep, letting the noises the Omega was making push him onward. Slick continued gushing out of the Omegan cunt, becoming more like a beverage for Will at this point, until he finally moved just slightly upward and sucked the Omega's clit into his mouth.

The Omega's hips bucked beneath his grasp, a surprised and deeply pleasured *"Oh!"* sounding throughout the room. Will gripped his hips tighter, slamming them back down onto the bed. He sucked long and hard on the cocklet in his mouth, before his sucks descended into rapid things, sucking and swallowing and–

A *gush* of slick erupted, a pressured stream of the fluid coating Will's chin. He nearly ignored it, continuing his suckling despite the Omega beneath him quite literally beginning to shake. It didn't take long, however, for the scent of the slick to become overwhelming, and he swiped it off with his hand, licking it off of his fingers and palm.

It was then that he realized the Omega was staring at him as he did so, pupils blown wide and eyes shining with lust and intrigue.

Will, at long last, made eye contact with him, and it was only as he was starting to undo his own belt.

The Omega's gaze dropped to the Alpha's crotch then, taking in the outline of the pulsing erection beneath his khakis. Will nearly preened beneath the attention, no longer able to remind himself that this Omega couldn't possibly be impressed, that he's just in heat.

Will finally unsheathed enough to proceed, and that was all he needed, just barely pushing his pants and boxers down past his hips.

He leaned over the Omega, bracing himself with his arms, and he slotted himself inside.

Both men groaned long and loud, the slide easy enough for Will to bury himself down to the hilt. The sensation was indescribable, his jaw falling open as he pushed onward.

Will scarcely hesitated. He sat up, grabbing onto the Omega's hips once more, and he started up a harsh rhythm.

The Omega, for all this was worth, was mewling and moaning and gasping beneath him, his cunt beautifully stretched to accept this Alpha's girth. Will was hardly focused on how this must feel for the Omega, his rut brain only able to process the hot, wet heat that massaged his cock so wonderfully. The Omega's sounds became background noise.

Will was slamming into him repeatedly, the force shaking them both, the overwhelming feeling tearing sounds out of Will's throat that he never knew he'd make in his life. It wasn't until he felt another wave of slick gush between them both that he realized he was losing track of time, his mind focused entirely on his own sensation.

Selfish , he managed to think.

He reached down between them, gathering some of the slick and using it as a lubricant to thumb at the Omega's clit as he continued pounding into him. The Omega's back arched, noises of clear appreciation coming from beneath that mask.

That mask. It was practically mocking him at this point, obscuring the view of the lower half of his Omega's face while still leaving his neck completely exposed, allowing their scents to mingle together in the air. The perfect aroma to make Will's head spin, to completely wipe his brain of all logic.

He leaned over his Omega, their faces inches apart. He had to tear himself away from the Omega's gaze, the way the Omega was looking at him sending sparks directly to his cock and threatening to end this far too soon. The Alpha's knot was already beginning to swell, threatening to tug on the entrance of the Omega's hole.

Will buried his face in his Omega's neck, right where his scent was at its strongest. He kissed at that tantalizing gland, putting his lips around it and sucking hard. The Omega writhed

beneath him, letting out little gasps of surprised pleasure. This was as they should be, their natural state, his Omega cumming uncontrollably beneath him, *his* Omega, *his* –

A sharp cry of ecstasy echoed throughout the room when Will's fangs sank into the gland, when his knot was stuffed inside and his orgasm was swiftly followed by another of the Omega's.

Coming down from the high was a slow endeavor. The Omegan heat was put to an end by the Alpha's knot, the heat radiating off of his body beginning to dissipate slightly, enough to signal the breaking of the fever.

And yet Will's teeth were still in his neck.

The realization of what he'd just done was slowly dawning on him, like a man gazing up at an oncoming tsunami, unable to flee, unable to ever live freely again, only ever able to feel the crash of the wave that will decimate him on impact.

He had just gone into rut.

He had just mated an Omega.

He had just mated *Hannibal fucking Lecter* .

And it was all *planned* .

His breathing through his nose was becoming heavy, tears welling along his waterline and threatening to fall. He was panicking. He was well and truly panicking. This poor fucking Omega's heat had been planned, plotted, hand picked, specifically so that they could sit him down with an Alpha and have him mated, for likely no other purpose beyond humiliating him. And Will was selected as the tool of such humiliation.

He would never live this down. He could never move on. Neither of them could. A horrible thing had happened here, a horrible thing was *done* to this man, and this Omega was–

He was…

…purring?

Will finally managed to force his jaw off of Dr. Lecter's neck, pulling away with a bloodied maw and staring down at him, stunned.

Dr. Lecter, after everything that had just happened, was *purring* .

There wasn't an ounce of discomfort in his entire being, even after his heat had already ended. He was *pleased* .

Will didn't know whether to sigh in relief or be very, very afraid.

And yet he couldn't deny the nature of what that purring meant. He couldn't somehow insist that Dr. Lecter's look of sheer bliss was not there, or that he wasn't staring back at Will with pure, unbridled adoration. That was not a product of heat.

Then again, Will was in his own post-coital bliss. Will allowed himself to lay back down, his knot still inflated, his head resting on Dr. Lecter's chest.

And Dr. Lecter, the apparent saint that he was despite the several counts of homicide, allowed him to.

…For a few minutes.

“Will?”

Will, having been halfway to falling asleep on top of him, perked up immediately, propping himself on his elbows to face him.

“I do believe there’s a piece you’re missing,” the doctor said, the corners of his eyes crinkling.

What did he–?

...Oh .

Will swallowed thickly, staring down at that bright plastic mask. It was the only thing preventing him from becoming tartare, and yet it was the only thing in the way of completing the bond.

Theoretically, Hannibal Lecter could kill him now. Theoretically, if Will were to undo the straps of that mask, slide it off of his head, and allow those teeth that were already acquainted with human meat to reach his neck, Lecter could decide in an instant that Will wasn’t exactly worth his while. He could let him bleed out right then and there, or tear his throat out and let him asphyxiate while his own blood ran down his trachea and into his lungs, or–

“Weighing your options, now, are you?” Lecter said, amusement evident in his tone.

“No,” Will said. “Weighing yours.”

Lecter hummed in response, for some reason seeming mildly pleased to have heard it.

“My options are not many,” he told Will. “Even so, there is only one I have my eye on.”

“That doesn’t help,” Will said flatly.

The corners of Lecter’s eyes crinkled again, another sign that he was smiling, another sign that he was amused. He was apparently enjoying Will’s sardonic answers, as though it was a bit of friendly banter.

“Are you worried about the pain?” he asked.

Will looked at him, trying to discern what he was hearing.

It sounded like an attempt at goading him on. Insinuating that Will, that an *Alpha* , was nervous about how much a mating bite would hurt. Yet at the same time, his tone was completely even, not mocking in the slightest, as though it were a genuine question.

Dr. Lecter, on the other hand, didn’t seem as keen on pondering the situation as Will did.

“If you truly want to weigh my options, Will,” he went on, making Will realize just how much he was utilizing his first name despite the lack of reciprocation, “then you must consider. The bond will break if I do not complete it with you, and a broken bond is not particularly useful. You know now why you were sent in here. If not you, I would merely be stuck with another Alpha. That would not be pleasant for anybody involved.”

Will swallowed, his throat clicking as he did so. Imagining another Alpha entering the room, *using* him like this–

Using *his* Omega, his brain supplied without his permission.

Will sighed and sat up properly, mindful of his still swollen knot. Even so, he was unable to maneuver without it being slightly tugged. He froze, worried that he would have hurt the man beneath him, but Dr. Lecter’s only reaction was closing his eyes, and Will could see the bob of his throat as he swallowed. What that meant about how it felt for him was yet to be discerned.

Will reached forward, fumbling with the straps around Dr. Lecter's head. The doctor lifted his head slightly to help, his eyes now open and very intently gazing into Will's.

Will avoided his gaze, focused on undoing the straps. He finally managed to figure it out, and he pulled the straps loose, slowly, almost hesitantly, pulling the mask off of Dr. Lecter's face.

Dr. Lecter gave him a smile, and Will felt his stomach leap.

"There we are," was all Dr. Lecter said.

Taking a deep breath, and setting the mask aside, Will braced himself on his elbows again, daring to lean against him like he did before, daring to bare his neck and–

He *keened* when he felt the Omega's teeth pierce his scent gland, a high, humiliating sound. His arms shook and he collapsed onto him, gasping at the sensation. A pleasure unlike any other coursed through him, alongside shocks of piercing pain, and his body didn't even know what to do with itself any more. He was damn near whimpering, writhing on top of his new mate.

He felt a familiar heat pooling in his lower abdomen, his muscles starting to clench, and his cock and knot pulsed with the force of his second orgasm, new spurts of cum shooting directly into his mate.

Dr. Lecter groaned around the scent gland, purring at yet another sensation of being filled, which didn't quite help the state Will was in.

Will, still shocked, still dealing with the overwhelming pained pleasure of Omegan teeth in his scent gland, was shaking on top of him.

“F…F–fuck, I’m sor…I’m sorry,” he gasped out, his hand coming between them to push on Lecter’s chest, to very *carefully* try and get him to unlatch at last.

Dr. Lecter, whatever brand of sadist he was, did not yet let go. Not until he personally watched Will’s reaction to the sensation remain the same, or until he’d held on for as long as Will had. Whichever came first, not even he was sure.

He opened his jaw at last, lapping at the bleeding wound and purring at the taste, even as Will hissed at the sting. Will pulled away, a hand on his neck, looking at the very content face of Dr. Lecter.

Lecter licked across his teeth, tasting as much of Will’s blood as he could. “Incredible. I’m very happy to discover that you nourish yourself properly, Will.”

“Fuck you,” Will bit, averting his eyes from the viscerally erotic display. The twitch of his cock inside of his mate betrayed him, but aside from Lecter’s knowing grin, neither of them spoke on it.

Will stood only slightly separated from the little crowd of people, yet still felt enough like he was embedded amongst the noise that he wanted to pull his hair out.

His new mate– who he supposed he should probably get used to referring to by his first name– stood proudly beside him, having donned a suit that the FBI had apparently held onto from when he’d been arrested. Dr. Le– *Hannibal* didn’t seem to mind the crowd at all, despite most of them being either FBI or employees of the BSHCI, and despite the fact that they were all talking about him in what was not exactly a wonderful light.

“The plan was to deliver him directly to his Alpha’s house,” Alana told a small group, a combination of BSHCI orderlies, guards, FBI personnel, and local police. “But *apparently* , there’s the matter of collecting some of his belongings first.”

They were trying to figure out whether or not to transport him to Will's house, or to allow him to stop by his own first. The latter would make more sense, considering that dropping him off directly at Will's place would just cause Will to have to bring him to his old house anyway. Not that Alana particularly cared about anything about this being an inconvenience to Will.

Apparently.

"May I?"

Will blinked, startled back into the reality he'd started to zone out of.

His ma– *Hannibal* (God, he was terrible with this already) was looking at him now, brows slightly lifted, expecting a response. Will looked around, realizing that there were multiple people looking at him now, awaiting his reply.

It dawned on him then that they were awaiting his *permission* , and he nearly felt sick.

Will shook his head, huffing, before looking at Hannibal. "Whatever it is you wanna do."

That small smile of his, becoming a common occurrence around Will now, made a reappearance before being directed towards Alana, who didn't look particularly happy to see it.

"It would seem my Alpha would allow me to return to my home first," Hannibal said, looking very much like the smuggest little bastard Will had ever seen.

"Fine," came Alana's reply. "There'll be a police escort, but we can allow it. Will, would you like to keep his restraints on hand?"

Will almost physically recoiled. “What?”

“His restraints. The mask, the strai–”

“No,” Will cut her off.

Ignoring his agitation, she merely marked his reply on whatever paper was clipped onto the clipboard she was holding.

“How about heat suppressants?” she asked. “He had been on a regimen of those. Do you want him to continue?”

“Ask *him* ,” Will snapped at her.

"I'm asking *you* ."

"It's *his* medication."

" *You're* his Alpha."

Will’s sudden growl cut through the crowd, causing various people to stop and stare in concern.

It had caught even *him* off guard, but he wasn’t embarrassed by it. No, he didn’t normally growl so easily, but Alana’s line of questioning set him off pretty quickly. As though she hadn’t already tampered with the Omega’s autonomy, she was trying to allow someone *else* to tamper with it now.

Will wasn’t going to play her sick game any more than he’d already been made to.

In contrast to how quickly he'd snapped, he felt a warm hand slowly press onto his shoulder. It was an unhurried thing, and surprisingly to Will, a comfort.

"You'll greatly struggle to convince her, Will. The sooner you answer her list of questions, the sooner we can depart," Hannibal assured him. His voice was calm, a soothing tether in a sea of–

A Beta officer drew his gun, convinced of inherent danger at the effects of the Omegan Calming on the Alphas and Omegas around him. The moment Will spotted a flash of metallic black, his growl returned in full force. Uncharacteristically, he was almost ready to *pounce* , when–

"Officer, *lower* your weapon."

Jack's voice radiated around the space, the Calming evident in his voice. Jack had a tendency to use it like a Command, and with him, it worked in a very similar manner. The officer was quick to comply, looking embarrassed. Will didn't particularly find himself caring about that Beta's embarrassment.

His attention returned to the Omega beside him, processing what he was seeing.

The gun was no longer aimed at him, and he wasn't exactly the sort of man to become easily frightened. Even so, the short incident seemed to make it set into Hannibal's mind that, despite legally being freed, he would not be treated accordingly. He was not an acquitted man, but one who was released with one harsh condition. A twisted version of house arrest.

Will found himself scratching subconsciously at his bond, inadvertently releasing more of his scent in the area. He only realized the action when his mate took a deep inhale, already seeming to settle more.

Will almost found himself wondering, if Hannibal could remain so silent and calm now, what would cause the Omega to actually whimper for him.

He tried to eject the thought from his head. He didn't want to think about that.

He managed to force concentrating on the man so far out of his head that minutes passed by without further issue. The only thing pulling him back into reality was another gentle hand on his shoulder, a steady method of bringing him back. Will wondered if he should be vaguely worried that Hannibal already knew him enough to know when he needed that, but he decided he wouldn't worry about it.

As the guards and orderlies left, and FBI personnel and officers flocked to their vehicles, Hannibal moved only slightly ahead before stopping and turning, waiting for Will to walk with him.

Will had paused entirely by Alana, bringing his gaze to her at last.

Alana, in the meantime, didn't seem too affected by anything. She was idly going over the paperwork on her clipboard, making sure she had everything in order.

"Still wondering if I can heal?" she asked, as though she could initiate friendly banter at a time like this.

"Heal?" he repeated, almost mockingly. "No."

Alana glanced up then, her curiosity successfully piqued.

"No?"

"No. You don't need to *heal*, you need to have your medical license taken before you make countless other people need to *heal*."

Her expression barely shifted, but her gaze on him grew more intense.

"...And what exactly does that mean?" she asked after a moment.

"You know what it means, Alana," he said flatly. "Here's hoping no one else has to deal with your fucked up sense of justice."

Only then did he move, walking alongside his new mate to his car. He had enough decency to open the passenger door for him, which his Omega visibly seemed to appreciate.

Alana could find out about her employee on her own time, Will decided bitterly.

The ride was mostly silent. It had started with Will irritatedly clicking through the radio before turning it off altogether, staring through the windshield as his jaw set tightly.

He didn't have to look to see that Hannibal was frowning. Not that he was shocked, Alphas were usually known to be able to smell distress in their mate much stronger than Omegas could in return, but this Omega had been noted to have a *very* strong sense of smell.

"Forgive my directness," his mate finally spoke up, "but I don't suppose you may want to discuss how you're feeling?"

Will huffed. "How are *you* feeling?" he countered.

Hannibal didn't seem fazed by his attitude. "Calm…Intrigued. I suppose 'wondering what the future holds' is the most accurate answer," he explained. "For the most part, I am content to see it moment by moment. You're not feeling as steady about it, however."

“How’d you guess?” Will bit back, before letting out a low exhale. “Sorry.” And then, when his curiosity got the better of him: “What does it smell like?”

“Typically your scent is something along the lines of burning wood, sometimes like the nighttime air in a forest. Wood and nature itself, with that hint of civilization,” Hannibal answered. “Currently it lies more along the lines of burnt citronella. A note of acidity, indicative of anger, irritation, or fear. Though typically the latter option would involve a much stronger acid note.”

Will’s brows briefly raised, acknowledging the explanation. It did make a good amount of sense.

“How would you describe mine?” came Hannibal’s next question before Will had much more time to think.

“Uh– Kind of…rosemary-ish,” Will said with a shrug. “Something earthy, but fresh. Something green, but there’s some kind of spice in there. I guess…like moss and cinnamon. I don’t know, I don’t know how to explain it. There’s something mildly sweet in there, but it keeps to the theme. Like dark chocolate or something.”

Hannibal gave another of his signature small smiles, nodding once. “That sounds fairly accurate…Have there been any other notes? Anything that seems *off* to you?”

Will shook his head, worrying his lower lip between his teeth. “That’s just the thing. I haven’t been able to smell an *ounce* of distress on you this whole time. I don’t know why.”

“...I have not been distressed,” Hannibal said, as though it were the simplest thing in the world.

“I don’t understand that,” Will said, almost under his breath, turning the car in time with the SUV ahead of him.

There was a brief silence, Hannibal seeming to be taking the time to think about that. Finally, he spoke again.

“I assure you, if I’m under any stress, I will find a way to let you know,” Hannibal told him.

Will gave a nod, and that was the extent of their conversation.

The surface of his car was warm as he leaned against it, parked outside of his new mate’s old home alongside three escort vehicles.

It looked, from the outside, exactly like the sort of home Will expected a man like him to have. Large, yet externally somewhat nondescript. Will had seen photos of the interior, all coming from Hannibal’s file. It was just as vast and ornate as a man like Hannibal would have.

Hannibal had initially invited him to enter. Will had declined.

Will likely would’ve felt guilty, seeing Hannibal enter the house alone, yet after his initial copious amounts of stress wore off, he wasn’t sure he could feel much of anything at the moment. Not even when, out of the corner of his eye, he saw the FBI vehicle’s door open, and Jack began to approach.

“You sure you’re gonna be alright when you get home?” he asked, as though it could be friendly conversation.

“I’m not really sure of anything anymore,” Will answered. It was as honest as he could get.

Jack nodded, standing beside Will, looking towards the house.

“I was hoping I’d never have to come back here,” he said.

Will did not respond.

Jack sighed, realizing that beating around the bush wasn’t going to get him anywhere. Not that it ever did when it came to Will, he just had higher hopes for the state they were in.

“Look, I know it may not matter much to you at this point, but I *did* try to talk them out of using you,” Jack said.

“But you were okay with them using *someone* ,” Will countered. “It didn’t have to be me, but it had to be an Alpha, right? Someone to tie him to?”

“Will–”

“Don’t give me more excuses, Jack,” Will cut him off. “Who authorized this?”

“...Someone above me,” Jack answered, as though as a means of assurance. “Nothing I could do but try to reduce collateral damage.”

“Purnell, if I had to hazard a guess?”

“How’d you know?” Jack replied with an air of sarcasm. They both knew it was obvious.

“She’s who you answer to, and she doesn’t exactly have a knack for being a humanitarian,” Will answered anyway. He removed his glasses, pinching the bridge of his nose and scrubbing his hand through his beard before placing them back on. “What’s worse than what the BSHCI– what *Alana* allowed to happen was that it could be done with the tacit agreement of those sworn to uphold the law.”

Jack didn't respond to that. There really wasn't a whole lot left that he could say. Nothing that would matter to Will, that was.

The front door of the house opened again, and out came Hannibal with two gigantic pieces of luggage.

Jack turned to Will. "...Call me if anything goes down, alright?" he firmly instructed. His own way of expressing concern.

Will supposed he appreciated it, in a way, even though he had no plans to comply.

Jack turned and headed back to the SUV he came from, as Hannibal made his way down the front steps and directly to Will, luggage in tow.

Before Hannibal could speak, Will nodded over towards the Bentley parked nearby.

"Do you still have the keys to that thing?"

Hannibal blinked, glancing towards the sleek vehicle. "Yes, they're just inside."

"Why don't you take your car, then?" Will suggested.

His mate turned to him then, looking mildly surprised. What Will was suggesting went beyond just taking a familiar vehicle, or giving them both some space for the time being. No, Will was suggesting that Hannibal have his own means of transport. Will was suggesting that Hannibal shouldn't be stuck relying on him should he desire to leave Wolf Trap.

Will was, once again, reiterating his desire for his mate to have autonomy.

Hannibal gave him a soft smile.

“Thank you, Will,” he said, his tone more sincere than anything Will had heard that day.

Will shook his head, averting his eyes. “Don’t thank me for that. It’s your car, after all.”

Hannibal’s gaze on him was a warm thing, yet one of intrigue. He looked Will up and down, taking in every bit of what he saw. Will had some of his own brand of justice embedded in his skin, but he refused to be deemed a hero for it. To him, it was basic decency that the world seemed to be missing.

Hannibal’s smile grew.

“I suppose I’ll see you at home, then,” he said lightheartedly before returning to his house to grab his keys, then carrying his things off to his car.

Will watched him as he went, as though studying him. Hannibal was hoisting his heavy luggage without much effort at all. Will supposed that, maybe in another life, Hannibal had kept his strength hidden, or maybe would’ve even convinced someone to grab his bags for him. Nowadays, everyone in the surrounding area knew that he could lift a body without any problem at all, and thus there was no need to hide his strength.

Something inside of him wondered if he’d ever see that strength in action.

He shook it off, stepping around his car to reenter the driver’s side. There was still quite a ways to go before anything could be remotely settled, but at least he would have the drive mostly to himself. At least he could *think* .

At least being in his car alone meant that he wouldn’t have to deal with any more of his new mate failing to be subtle enough in his glances in Will’s direction after sensing his stress.

The vehicles were off on the road again. Will's car smelled like spiced pine.

The escort vehicles left as soon as the Volvo and Bentley pulled into the driveway. Not even Jack stopped to give some parting words, which Will was honestly grateful for. He'd gone from stressed to numb and back to stressed again, and the last thing he needed was to end up protectively snapping at Jack because he and Hannibal's past beef reared its ugly head.

Hannibal was the first to step out of his vehicle, his gaze raking over the property, taking it in with interest.

Will had never much had the feeling that his home wasn't enough, but that feeling was starting to form.

He got out of his car before he could overthink it, shutting the door behind him as Hannibal approached, eyes still fixed on the little white home.

"Remote. Like a cabin for someone who didn't grow up in the woods," Hannibal noted, tilting his head as he smiled at Will. "I feel I'm discovering more about you already."

"Well we're about to discover a *lot* about you," Will said, starting to head towards the door.

Hannibal, despite how curious he seemed about that statement, followed without question. He was giving the home an approving gaze as they came nearer, despite its chipping paint and overall having a disheveled look that matched its owner.

Or perhaps that was *why* he was giving it such an approving gaze.

Will shook the thought from his head. The sound and scent of his pack had to be powerful by the time they were on the porch, there was no way Hannibal couldn't tell that there were several dogs inside. And yet he didn't react in the slightest, merely waiting for Will to grant him entry into the home.

Will swung the door open at last, both holding it open for his mate and allowing the herd to flow out of the house.

The dogs all stopped to sniff at the stranger, who in turn bent slightly to allow them to get a better scent, and to gently pet at heads and noses. Once deeming him a friendly stranger, the dogs went running off the rest of the way outside, exploring the yard and doing their business.

Will gestured inside with a slight sigh. "Make yourself at home," he said dryly.

For the first time since Will had met the man, he hesitated.

It was an almost imperceptible thing, Hannibal's hesitation. A mere fraction of a second, eyeing Will for more notes of the Alpha's uncertainty before going ahead and stepping into the house.

Whatever emotion had been going on to cause the faltering was wiped out instantly, Hannibal's entry into the home inundating him with the scent of his Alpha.

Will stepped inside after, watching his mate, finding himself intrigued by the uncharacteristic reaction.

Will had never imagined it before, really, the effect he would have on a mate. He never entertained the idea of being mated long enough for it to cross his mind. He'd never thought of what an Omega might think of his scent, how they'd categorize it, how they'd react to it. He'd already gotten a solid analysis of his scent from Hannibal in the car earlier, but

watching his mate react instinctively to large amounts of his scent was an entirely new feeling.

Hannibal was gazing around every corner of the home, his irises being overtaken by his pupils. He inhaled deeply at every turn, following where the scent was the strongest…

He ended up standing beside Will's bed, which was more of a cot positioned off to the side in the living room. The realization seemed to dawn on him that he was encroaching on a more intimate area of the home without express invitation. He turned to Will, his pupils still blown wide, his expression a silent request for permission.

Will gave a nod, curious what he was asking for.

Hannibal turned to the bed once more, reaching down and carefully grabbing the one pillow that was there. He visibly swallowed, taking hold of the pillow in both hands, bringing it to his face, and inhaling *deeply* through his nose.

His eyes fluttered closed, and he let out a soft sigh.

Will could only watch, *fascinated* at this man's level of intrigue in his scent. Fascinated at how he reacted to it as though it was the sweetest thing he'd ever inhaled…

And then a whole other kind of sweet scent hit Will's nose.

His instincts told him to pursue it. His memory caused him to recoil.

Evidently, his Omega didn't like that.

The acidic "citronella" scent had hit the air again, and Hannibal turned to him, setting the pillow back down as his pupils constricted once more. Will swallowed, trying to gauge his response.

It dawned on him then just how serious displeasing this man could be.

And yet Hannibal remained entirely calm, opting instead to walk over and settle himself down into a chair, despite his now slick-soaked briefs. It was almost like staking a claim in that regard, all while acting entirely nonchalant.

“Will. Have a seat, please.”

Will took a breath, finally shutting the door behind him.

“No,” he said, opting to pace the floor instead, his hands stuffed into his pockets.

Hannibal’s eyes tracked his movement, following with a steady gaze. He didn’t seem irritated by Will not heeding his request, but he didn’t exactly look thrilled, either.

“You’re upset,” Hannibal said matter-of-factly.

“I know,” was all Will said back.

“You feel as though your life has been upturned, and now you must not only deal with having a mate in your home, but the likes of myself in a space you deemed safe.”

Now the Omega sounded upset. It was an incredibly slight thing, nothing more than a crack in his mask, but it was there alongside his implication.

You feel I’m tainting your home.

Will snorted then, rubbing at his beard. His wry amusement caught Hannibal off guard, and Will watched him blink a few times, eyeing Will curiously.

"It's…It really doesn't have a lot to do with who you are," Will said. "Maybe that makes me crazy after all, but what you do is kind of far from a shock by now."

There was a short pause, and Will seemed to consider something, the debate between leaving it unsaid and saying it aloud visibly warring in his mind. Soon, one won over. "...Even with me being mated to someone like you, you still got the short end of the stick being mated to someone like me."

If Hannibal had been surprised before, he was *stunned* now.

"...Elaborate," he asked slowly, as though he needed time to find a polite way of responding.

"You're a killer, but you're not insane," Will said, continuing his pacing. "Even with who you are and what you do, you garnered plenty of attention before your arrest. You were practically a pillar of society, your pristine reputation proceeding you at every turn. And that was a reputation you earned, because people saw you as kind, polite, everything like that. Me, on the other hand…There's a reason I've been by myself this whole time, Dr. Le–... *Hannibal* ," he corrected himself, electing to ignore the shine in Hannibal's eyes when he did so. "I wasn't mated because I've known for decades now that no one would want to be mated to me. And now you're stuck with the FBI's little bloodhound, the guy who can barely look people in the eye, who gets into everyone's heads regardless of if they want him there."

Will swallowed hard, shaking his head. "It's bad enough that they forced you to bond. They could've picked *anyone* for you, but you got especially unlucky. The fact that it's *me* is just another level of humiliation for you to face. Another way to knock you down a peg, in their eyes…Well, in *everyone's* eyes."

Hannibal watched as Will went on, his mouth slightly open, the closest thing to a dropped jaw he could probably get.

“...If I may ask for clarification,” he began, adjusting himself to sit taller, more *proper* if that was at all possible. “You hold the genuine belief that, despite being mated to a notorious killer and likely having the rest of your life be affected by this bond…that *I* am the least lucky party because I am mated to someone who does not deem themself socially adequate?”

Every part of his tone was careful, as though it was a constant effort to maintain the polite composure he preferred for himself. When every part of him seemed to be thinking *“Did I actually just fucking hear that?”* , he instead opted for *“To clarify–”* . It was like talking to someone who was filtering their words like they were sending a professional email.

Either way, Will paused, glancing at him, looking much less confident (if it was at all possible for him to be less so). “That’s not…I’m not just talking about bigger social situations, Hannibal. People don’t like to even be one on one with me for a reason.”

“And what reason would I find for that?”

Will opened his mouth to speak, but immediately closed it.

It dawned on him then that, despite every interaction they’d had thus far being laced with the venom of other people’s wrath, Hannibal had not at any point seemed unhappy to be around him. The realization felt like stepping into wonderland, finding a world that was completely unfamiliar and odd.

People had been able to handle his calmer Alphan tendencies, but no one could deal with him as a *person* . Hannibal, meanwhile, was readily eager to deal with it all.

And it made absolutely no fucking sense.

“...I attacked you,” Will said quietly, finally answering Hannibal’s question.

Hannibal inclined his head then, failing to hide his amused look. “Attacked? When biology consumed us both, when we were equal in our temporary madness? When we both carried

the same level of desire, you feel you somehow attacked me?"

"I–" Will scrubbed at his face, growing frustrated. "You were forced into heat and locked in a room with an Alpha. You were– You were *violated* ."

"Not by you," Hannibal corrected. "You were as much of a pawn as I was."

The sweet scent came back into the room, and Hannibal briefly averted his gaze. "That, and even while consumed by your rut, you were rather focused on making it an enjoyable experience."

Will swallowed, the scent in the air distantly making his fangs ache. He averted his gaze as well.

"...I didn't want to hurt you," he argued.

Hannibal grinned at him then. "I don't recall ever saying I was hurt. As a matter of fact, I would argue that being brought to orgasm at least thrice would prove–"

"Jesus Christ," Will muttered, visibly flushing and turning away entirely, swiping a hand down his face.

"Will," Hannibal insisted. "I am not your victim, in the same way that I do not deem you to be mine. I have a feeling we would not have gotten along as we have had that been the case."

Will considered that for a moment.

Truthfully, they'd been almost entirely fine together, save for Will going through the motions of dealing with being used in such a horrific way. But that had not been Hannibal's doing, nor did Will ever blame him for it, or even take it out on him in any way, nor had Hannibal taken

his situation out on Will. As a matter of fact, Hannibal had been nothing but encouraging of their situation once the initial act was over with. Once mated, he had easily taken to his role.

"...How much did Alana tell you about me?" he asked at last, turning to Hannibal once more.

"She primarily told me of the work you do," Hannibal answered. "Dr. Bloom seemed to be under the impression that I would feel threatened by your empathy, as though its place in your mind and within your exceptional skill set would somehow make enemies of us. Truthfully, I believe that she held the genuine belief that my disallowing her to fully see me meant that I would refuse you as well. Thus far, the result has been entirely the opposite of her expectations." He wet his lips with his tongue, and then: "I've not had this level of compassion from someone. That stems from your empathy."

Will nearly laughed at that, stuffing his hands in his pockets again. "Compassion is a hell of a way to put it…"

"What else is there for me to call it, when you've already begun spending your time attempting to alleviate any troubles I may have?" Hannibal asked, raising his brows. "If you are somehow designated to be my tormenter, then by all means, I will gladly reside in Hell."

Will balked at the statement, his mouth swinging open as he attempted to put words together in his shock.

"You can't be serious," he managed. "I…I *mounted* you, and I've barely spoken to you since we got out of that room."

"You also did all you could to ensure my comfort during and after our mating, and dedicated the rest of your time to advocating for my autonomy," Hannibal argued. "Forgive me for not deeming it a grievous sin that you required some room to breathe afterward."

Will remained entirely quiet after that, simultaneously struggling to process it and understanding the sentiment completely. He wasn't sure how someone could come out of this so easily unscathed, and yet–

“You don’t seem to carry much concern for your *own* autonomy,” Hannibal said, interrupting his thoughts. “You and I were both tied to the stake, and yet while you direct irritation towards those who put you there, you’re far more upset about not being able to stop the flames, particularly from burning me.”

“It’s *different* ,” Will insisted.

“We were in much of the same position, and yet while you insist on deeming me a victim of biology, you refuse to hold yourself to the same standard,” Hannibal responded. “I find it difficult to believe that you’re the sort to infantilize others, therefore I can only assume this must stem from your disdain for overbearing Alphas. If it must be said aloud, Will, your going into rut does not make you monstrous. I wouldn’t even deem you discourteous, given how the endeavor went.”

Will took a deep breath, trying to steady himself. Hannibal was…right. He was *entirely* right, actually, and was currently reading him as easily as a children’s book.

Will glanced at him again. “...How do *you* feel?”

“Relieved,” Hannibal said. “My situation could have been terrible, but instead I have you. If anything, I had thought that when you knew that I’d been made aware of what would take place, that your anger would be directed towards me as well.”

“You said yourself that you didn’t know I was unaware,” Will replied. “And you yourself were hardly ‘made aware’, you were *threatened* .”

“Then it would seem her weaponization did not work,” Hannibal said, smiling just a little.

Will's gaze rested on him then, silent, taking in every detail of what he saw sat before him.

This Omega seemed *happy* to be there. Beyond just being relieved that his situation did not come out worse, he took a genuine interest in Will. From the moment they'd met, Hannibal had directed the conversation towards Will himself, intrigued at every stage.

It was difficult to imagine, and yet it was incredibly, incredibly relieving.

Instead of furthering the argument, Will opted to gaze around, trying to look at his humble abode as though through fresh eyes.

"...I hope you can at least get moderately comfortable in a place like this," he commented.

Hannibal lifted his chin slightly, gazing at Will with his usual mild amusement. "You and your home share many qualities. It is a reflection of your life, apparently down to the way you insult it."

Ouch. Alright.

Will stuffed his hands back in his pockets, glancing toward the kitchen, then glancing towards the clock. He found a rather convenient way to change the subject. "It's getting late…I should probably get dinner going. I can cook for two, if you'd like."

Hannibal's amused look fell almost immediately.

As with most of his expressions, it was a slight shift, a change in his lips and a change in his eyes, almost imperceptible had it not been Will who spotted it. Where he had previously been relaxed, even with his superb posture, he was now tense.

Will offered a small smile, running a hand through his curled bangs. "You don't have to eat what I make if you don't want to. I get it. Spending that long with prison food, I imagine you'd be a bit peculiar on what you'd wanna eat."

The tension dissipating was just as immediate as how it had arrived in the first place. Hannibal offered a small smile of his own before standing. Will got the feeling that Hannibal was just going along with the readily available excuse that he had just provided for him, but even so, he didn't comment on it. It wasn't as though he'd never done the same thing in a conversation.

"If you wouldn't mind," Hannibal began, inclining his head as he gazed towards the kitchen, then back at Will. "I would like to cook for you."

Will's chuckle that followed was more out of a sudden nervousness than amusement. "You don't– You don't have to do that. I don't expect you to take on random domestic Omega duties. You can do whatever you'd like here."

Hannibal blinked. It was a slow gesture, akin to a cat trying to show its trust in its owner.

"...I would like to cook for you," he repeated, his smile widening. "Forgive me, I hadn't been aware that you needed to be reminded that I am not insulted by my sex."

That drew a sudden laugh from his Alpha, who looked away and covered his mouth. Even as he tried to hide it, the mirth was present in them both.

Hannibal, content with the lightened mood, began his stride directly into the kitchen, Will following closely behind.

It was odd, following someone else through his own home, but Will supposed he might as well get used to the feeling of Hannibal roaming through the rooms. Will *did* want to give him free reign, after all.

After a few minutes, Will was standing, leaning back against his kitchen table. It had a few chairs, as though he'd ever have actual company.

Well. He supposed now he did.

He watched, curiosity piqued, as Hannibal rummaged through his kitchen. Hannibal seemed to be taking mental notes of everything he saw, and Will wouldn't be shocked if he was already plotting to replace the food in his cabinet, or even entire kitchen appliances altogether.

Though, as per usual, Hannibal was making an effort to keep himself from appearing judgmental. That being said, with the way he eyed the cans on Will's shelves, Will would prefer hearing him complain.

"Hannibal."

His gaze lifted, and he looked over his shoulder at his Alpha, brows raised.

"You can just say you don't like what I have."

Hannibal sighed then, staring more openly disappointedly at the expanse of non-perishables. Will bit his tongue to keep himself from laughing.

"You seem to nourish yourself, and yet you have a complete lack of appropriate materials," Hannibal commented, shutting a cabinet door. "I find myself surprised that you've yet to contract scurvy."

Will did snort then, though he managed to keep it at that. "Terribly sorry that I don't have your usual cuisine available. You wanna see if the neighbors weigh enough to feed two?"

Hannibal turned, eyeing him, entirely silent.

Will had intended to be making fun of him…and yet it didn't come off that way, did it? No, it didn't, because he didn't put nearly enough bite behind it. Because he didn't want to.

Because that was his mate, horrifying palate and all.

And Hannibal's eyes were practically shining as he looked back at Will, a ghost of a smile on his lips. Either because he knew it was a failed attempt at making fun of him, failed entirely because Will didn't have enough distaste behind him, or because he thought it was a genuine attempt at matching his own humor. Will wasn't sure.

Will could feel his face starting to heat up, and he averted his eyes.

"I have, uh, other meat in the fridge," he said at last. "Take your pick."

Hannibal nodded, moving to the refrigerator.

Will could swear that there was a slight pep in his step. Neither commented on it.

Dinner had passed without much conversation.

Watching Hannibal cook had been an interesting thing, seeing the way he moved so fluidly, even throughout a kitchen that was entirely foreign to him. Maybe he was accustomed to it due to it being filled with his mate's scent. Maybe he was just that good. Who knew.

Hannibal had at last set two plates on the table, opting to sit directly across from his Alpha. He explained the dish, using various words in a language Will didn't understand. The dish looked simple enough, yet somehow equally complicated. Will wasn't sure how he managed that, but it was fascinating in and of itself.

He could feel Hannibal's eyes on him, with the Omega not even reaching for his own utensils until he saw Will get a slice of meat on his fork.

His gaze was nearly searing in its intensity as Will took a bite.

Unbidden, Will let out a low contented sound at the taste, something almost akin to a soft moan. His eyes fell shut as he chewed, before opening to look at his mate.

"I think this is a sign cooking duties should permanently go to you," he said almost playfully. "This is delicious."

He could hear the soft purr that erupted immediately from his Omega, and he could hardly bite back a grin.

They had eaten in silence afterward, with Hannibal practically beaming the entire time in pride, knowing that his Alpha enjoyed the first meal he'd cooked for him.

Will studied him along with the food, considering. It was beginning to look as though Hannibal's primary languages of affection were very much in line with what was typically expected of Omegas. It was a surprising revelation, given that everything that was known about Hannibal Lecter beforehand spoke to everyone's surprise that he was an Omega to begin with. Will wondered if it was different now that he was mated.

Will wondered if he'd actually been like this the whole time, and if he was the reason Hannibal was showing it comfortably.

The thought sprouted a warmth in his chest, and he finished his meal in peaceful silence.

Hannibal had been the first to finish, offering to take care of the dishes while Will remained seated to enjoy his wine. Given his previous revelation, Will agreed. Given Hannibal's smile, it would seem he was right.

Hannibal had left the kitchen, with Will still sipping on his wine at the table. It wasn't anything particularly fantastic, but it was the only bottle in the house, and Hannibal seemed satisfied enough with it. Will had tried to apologize for the quality, but had been promptly brushed off.

"Aside from your poor quality of nutrition, I refuse to look down upon anything in your home," Hannibal said, almost sternly. "Everything here is to your taste. I am perfectly content being allowed to take part in it."

That had satisfied them both enough, and Will relaxed.

He heard some vague sounds of rummaging in the living room, as well as Hannibal venturing upstairs for brief periods of time. Will didn't get up from his seat, nor did he comment on it. He'd already given his mate free range to explore the place, and Hannibal had seemed respectful enough about his things.

Eventually he finished his glass, rinsing it in the sink before moving into the living room at last.

And he froze.

"...What are you doing?"

His tone must have given away his agitation, because Hannibal glanced up from his work, frowning.

"What's the matter, Will?"

"You're building a *nest* on my bed."

Hannibal blinked. “...I am still failing to see the issue.”

“Your nest is on my *bed* .”

“Repeating the same sentence does not make it any clearer, Will.”

“Don’t you have your own house to have your nest in?”

Hannibal frowned then, his scent growing sour *fast* . “Are you not planning for us to live together?”

“That’s not–” Will sighed. “That’s not what I meant…”

“Then explain, please.”

Will groaned, swiping a hand down his face. “For the love of– Look. I know there’s a whole thing with…you can’t just go into someone’s nest. And this is on my *bed* . What am I gonna do?”

Hannibal inclined his head, his eyes once again alight with amusement.

“Your issue with my nest being on your bed is that you assume you will be unwelcome in it? You believe I would build my nest where my mate sleeps, and not invite him in for the foreseeable future?”

Will worried his lower lip between his teeth, glancing down again at the walls of blankets and pillows surrounding the bed. “...I–”

“Get in bed, Will.”

Will blinked, caught off guard. “What?”

“Bed,” Hannibal repeated simply. “You’ve had a long day. We both have. Would it not make sense for us to rest now?”

Will looked away from the nest, opting to look out a window instead. The idea of sleeping alongside his Omega, this person he’d met *today* , this gracious thing who genuinely seemed to appreciate Will’s presence in his life already, gave Will a fuzzy feeling in his chest that he wasn’t yet ready to unpack.

“...We still need to get your bags,” he said. “And I have to shower, anyway.”

Hannibal kept his gaze locked on him, some brand of amused stubbornness radiating off of him that Will couldn’t quite place.

“...Very well,” he seemed to relent.

Will gave a short nod, and stepped away to–

He heard an Omegan whimper.

He turned sharply, his instincts telling him to deal with it immediately, only to discover Hannibal sitting entirely nonchalant, not making a single peep. As a matter of fact, Hannibal raised his brows at him, as though curious what had made him return so easily.

Will’s eyes narrowed, and he stepped away again.

Another whimper.

Will moved back into the room. “Is something wrong?” he asked almost irritably.

“Nothing,” Hannibal answered innocently. “Nothing at all.”

Will peered at him, his gaze nothing but suspicious. After enough time, Hannibal frowned, nearly ready to ask if everything was alright with him.

Will turned away–

Another whimper.

“**Stop that!**” he snapped over his shoulder. “Just come help me get your things.”

As he turned away again, he could hear a little amused chuckle behind him. This man was going to be the death of him, and not in the way he’d anticipated.

Hannibal had been entirely silent throughout the process of retrieving his luggage from his car. He’d been even more silent once everything was inside, dogs included.

Will had been casting glances his way, only for Hannibal to smile in return. Nothing seemed wrong, and yet…

Will finally decided there was nothing for him to worry about, and went off to shower at last.

He didn’t exactly take long, aside from having to try and detangle his curls afterward. He’d practically scalded himself with water, his feet still red as he was toweling himself off.

The cool air hit as he opened the bathroom door, along with a fresh pine scent.

And then, the further he got down the stairs, something smelled very *sweet* .

Will’s brows furrowed, recognizing it instantly. It wasn’t exactly a secret that Hannibal had slicked earlier when scenting his pillow, so having left him alone with a nest in his bed, maybe it had happened again? Will couldn’t exactly hold that against him, as much as he–

Will stepped into the room, pausing entirely.

Hannibal was in his nest alright, without a single shred of clothing. He was shifting, his hips rocking, soft little moans leaving his mouth with every movement. Between his legs, trapped beneath a death grip with his fingers, was the very pillow of Will’s that he’d scented earlier.

Will’s jaw set, though beyond slick ruining his pillow, he didn’t know why he was so irritated.

“What do you think you’re doing?”

Hannibal looked up at last, as though having just realized he was there. Will knew that faux innocence was complete bullshit.

Hannibal didn’t halt his movements at all, continuing to rock, his slicked and stimulated cunt on full display for Will now as he grinded against that pillow. There was nothing short of mischief in his eyes, the smug look of a complete brat.

"I had invited you into my nest, Will. Into your own bed,” he said, as though making casual conversation. “I figured that if you didn't want to do what would typically be your job as my

Alpha, I could at the very least use something with your scent. An inadequate replacement, though I'm sure I could reach orgasm just as easily."

It was a provocation. The taunt of an Omega who knew Will had been adverse to the idea of mating him again, solely based on issues that didn't exist in the Omega's mind. Solely because of Will's own hesitance with things that Hannibal hadn't minded at all.

Will snarled, and he reached forward, harshly yanking the pillow out from under Hannibal, his pupils blowing wide as the tug forced it harshly across his Omega's clit on its way out from between his thighs.

He couldn't deny that the sight before him was the stuff of beauty, nor could he deny that his cock was already visibly swelling beneath his boxers.

Hannibal went to speak, but Will spoke first.

"**Ask *properly*** ."

Will could see the way his Omega's thighs shivered, the use of his Alpha Command causing more slick to gush from his abandoned cunt.

Hannibal carefully lowered himself onto the bed, leaning back and propping himself up on his elbows. His legs were spread, keeping himself on full display for his Alpha. A form of presenting.

"You've been incredibly displeased with how our first mating went," Hannibal said. "I wanted to urge you to try again. There are no metal walls here, Will. No restraints, and no planned heats." He wet his lips, and then added with a softer tone: "I want you to show me how you would prefer to have mated me."

Will could only stare at him.

They remained that way for a short while, locked in a stalemate. A stalemate, that was, until Hannibal's confidence was just beginning to falter.

Only then did Will just barely incline his head.

"I would have wrestled you."

Hannibal's eyes nearly sparkled at that. "Wrestled?"

Will nodded. "You said it yourself, I have a *distaste* for overbearing Alphas. We would've decided who takes charge fair and square."

At last, Will began to climb into the nest.

He could see his Omega just barely suppress a shudder. They both knew what his Alpha entering his nest meant, and Will did so with an air of complete nonchalance.

Then Will reached for his hands, holding them both before directing their grip into the air. Will pushed, and Hannibal pushed back. Just barely, but it was enough.

"Who would win?" Hannibal asked, his interest beyond piqued. "In your fantasy, is there a victor?"

"I don't know," Will said casually. "That is, I don't actually know who would win *fair and square* . You're strong…but you also want me to be rough with you."

His Omega swallowed. Hannibal did not argue.

Will grinned, just slightly.

"So I would take it as far as I can," Will said, applying just a bit more pressure, satisfied when Hannibal matched it. "We would stay in this sort of deadlock. You would be fighting more to impress me than to fight me. You want to show me your skill, but you also want a knot in your already slicked hole."

Hannibal's lips parted slightly, his next exhale just barely trembling as slick ran down his legs. "Will…"

"And then do you know what I would do, Hannibal?"

"What would you do?" Hannibal asked, his tone just beginning to verge on desperation.

Will leaned in, slowly, watching as the movement kept his mate almost frozen in place. He was moving as though he was going to kiss him.

And then, Will whispered:

"I would cheat."

Hannibal eyed him, his mind a flurry of arousal, fuzziness from their proximity, and confusion.

Will grinned, practically baring his teeth.

"**On your back, Omega.**"

His mate let out a soft gasp, his thighs quivering as more slick erupted from his already entirely wet hole. He moved to obey his Alpha, only to discover that Will wasn't letting go. He was not *allowing* him to *obey* .

"Will–"

"**Go on. On your back. Present that pretty cunt for your Alpha.**"

Hannibal was trembling like a leaf as Will finally guided him onto his back, slick covering the entire path down. Hannibal's chest was heaving as his legs parted and lifted so that his feet planted against the mattress, his oozing cunt on full display.

" *Alpha –*"

"**Cum.**"

" *Oh –*!"

Hannibal's entire lower half shook as his back arched, slick *gushing* from his completely untouched hole.

And then he dropped against the bed, having already been turned into a panting mess.

Just as soon as he thought he could relax, he was yanked upward by his Alpha again.

Before Hannibal could even speak, Will had him in a tight hold, pulling him so that Hannibal's back was against Will's front. Will's legs came around his waist, only to plant firmly between Hannibal's legs and onto the mattress, spreading out and forcing Hannibal to spread with him.

One of Will's delightful, calloused hands snaked up to hold Hannibal by the throat. The other didn't so much as hesitate to begin rubbing at the weeping cunt.

Hannibal gasped, his hands gripping onto Will's wrists, even as his hips almost immediately began to push forward, grinding his entire vulva into his mate's hand.

"Will…" seemed to be the majority of what he was capable of saying. " *Alpha…* "

Will's hand tightened around his throat, and the Omega could've sworn that he was going to cum again. He very nearly did, his little noises growing in volume and desperation, until Will's hand slid up from his throat to clamp firmly around his mouth.

"I'd find a way to muzzle you, too," Will went on, as though casually picking up from where he'd left off. "But I would do it *my* way."

Will's free hand, now coated in slick, pulled away, only for two fingers to immediately plunge into his mate, beginning a rapid pace of pumping in and out.

Hannibal *mewled* into his hand, his back arching off of his mate's chest as his hips twitched towards the sensation. His walls clenched and throbbed around Will's fingers, the entirety of his cunt pulsing with need.

Will could recognize the muffled attempts at his name into his palm, and he smiled to himself, leaning down to press gentle kisses into his Omega's scent gland.

"Easy…" he cooed, pushing a third finger inside and relishing in the way his mate twitched in his embrace. "I'll take care of you…"

Before Hannibal could get any ideas about growing too accustomed to his treatment, Will's thumb rose, the pad of it attacking the Omega's clit with circling rubs.

At last, it very nearly seemed as though his mate wanted to plead for mercy, with the way he was practically whining into Will's hand as his own hands gripped whatever they could find to hold himself steady. It was far from enough, his body trembling in Will's hold as the Alpha used his fingers to fuck him through a second orgasm, slick ejecting onto his hand.

At last, the Omega collapsed into him, and Will finally let go.

Well, Will changed his hold, more like. He wrapped his arms around Hannibal's waist, allowing him to rest back onto him, letting him catch his breath.

Hannibal didn't seem to have the same stamina as he had that morning in the midst of his heat. It made sense, heats and ruts primed their bodies for copious amounts of mating. But the reality was that, outside of that heat, Hannibal was approaching fifty.

Then again, he apparently had the strength to hunt and kill several people. Will had a feeling he had the stamina in him this time around.

Will allowed his mate to have the rest anyway, knowing that regardless of whether he'd had enough or wanted more, he would be the one to indicate as much.

He heard a thick swallow.

"And then?"

It was quiet, spoken amidst Hannibal's labored breathing, but it was audible.

"Then?" Will repeated, amused. "Well…You seemed rather fond of cumming *thrice* . Wouldn't shut up about it, actually. I wonder if we can get you there again…"

His mate shuddered in his hold, a hand coming down to gently caress Will's thigh before Hannibal departed altogether, turning and laying back down on the bed. He spread his legs

the way he'd done before, the way he already knew Will liked him to present.

"Then come…" the Omega encouraged, purring softly for his mate. " *Breed* your Omega."

That did it.

Will took barely any time at all tearing his boxers off of himself, finally divesting himself of his shirt and tossing both items aside. It was nearly a blur for him what happened next, so stirred on and guided by his mate, until–

His jaw dropped, a low groan emitting from his throat as his cock pushed into his mate once again.

"There we are…" Hannibal encouraged with a groan of his own, his hands coming to rest on Will's back. "There we are…"

Will's head hung down, his body shuddering in his mate's hold. He felt the urge to simply lay down on top of him, to accept the embrace fully, but he knew that he couldn't. No, he had a job to do for them both.

But even then, he could tell something was *off* .

"Are you okay…?" he asked, looking up at him again.

Hannibal was taking deep breaths, and he nodded. "Yes, I'm…I'm alright, Will…"

"Are you sure? You look like– I dunno, like it hurts."

Hannibal huffed a little laugh, shaking his head.

“Will…I am no longer in heat, and you are *very* large. Forgive me for needing a moment.”

Will’s face flushed red, and he nodded.

After a minute or so, he could feel Hannibal rock his hips a bit, as though testing it out, before he nodded at last. “Go on, darling…Go ahead.”

Will nodded. He reared his hips back, and he slammed forward.

Both men *keened* , almost laughing when they looked at one another, realizing the very equal level at which they were both affected. Will’s previous dominance seemed mostly gone by then, replaced with someone who wanted to make this *good* for them both.

As his slow pace turned into something more brutal, something that made his Omega’s mouth hang open with gasps and wanton moans, he could feel Hannibal’s nails beginning to dig into his upper back as he held on. Will wondered distantly if Hannibal would’ve wanted to hold onto him at the BSHCI, too.

Either way, they were both freer in this moment. Will’s head dipped down further, and he began mouthing at Hannibal’s scent gland, relishing in the way his Omega’s sounds got higher, more desperate, as he sucked at it.

Maybe it was how worked up he’d already been, or maybe it was the way Hannibal kept gasping his name and gripping onto him tighter, but Will’s knot was already beginning to form and tug at his Omega’s hole. It didn’t take long afterwards for it to push in, and Will let out a shuddering gasp, his vision nearly whiting out as he spilled into his mate.

Only afterwards did he allow himself to collapse, feeling Hannibal’s fingers carding through his hair.

Will let his eyes open after about ten seconds, still catching his breath as he looked up at his mate.

“Did…Did you?”

Hannibal’s look of adoration shifted into something slightly less confident. “...Will, it’s alright if we don’t–”

“Fuck,” Will muttered, pushing himself up again. “Hang on.”

“Will– Darling, it’s alright, I don’t need to– *Oh* !”

Hannibal’s tune changed the moment he felt Will’s fingers on either side of his cocklet, using his slick as a lubricant to stroke him in earnest. Will grinned as he watched the change, seeing the way his Omega’s mouth hung open as his eyes closed, and feeling the walls of his cunt start to quiver around his cock.

“ *Will* …” came his gasp, almost a plea. “O–Oh my…Will– *Will* !”

Only about a minute later, Will could see and feel it. Hannibal’s back arched as his walls spasmed, more slick oozing around them both before his back hit the bed again.

Will grinned then, almost laughing. “Did you?”

Hannibal gave him a *look* , even amidst his panting, and Will was certain that he was probably thinking the rudest thing he’d ever come close to saying.

The two had been resting against one another, laying on their sides as Will's knot kept them together. Will felt as though it was his first chance to truly observe his mate, to see him at his most peaceful.

Truth be told, he was an absolutely beautiful man. Maybe it was the effect of their bond, but Will was managing to find every part of him endearing, every part of him something he wanted to keep close.

He was beginning to wonder if it felt anything like that for Hannibal, when an entirely different thought occurred to him.

"...Hannibal?"

His mate's eyes fluttered open, regarding him softly as he gave a little questioning hum in reply.

"I probably should've asked this sooner– a *lot* sooner," Will began, seeming anxious now. "Are you– Can…"

Will took a deep breath, starting again as Hannibal eyed him with a more concerned look.

"Are you…gonna end up pregnant?"

Almost immediately, the scent in the air changed. Those cinnamon and dark chocolate notes that lurked beneath the woodsy scents smelled *burnt* . Will froze up.

"I'm sorry– I didn't…I just, I didn't see if–"

Hannibal gave him a smile, but there was no joy behind it, Will knew that. Hannibal's hands came up to gently hold his face, the sadness in his eyes not dissipating in the slightest.

"...No," he answered softly. "No. And I never will."

Will blinked, taking a second to process that. "...You…Never?"

"Never," Hannibal repeated, somehow quieter as his hands lowered, his gaze dropping. "I've known for several decades now that I will never have the ability to. Despite the existence of my heat cycle, my reproductive system is not fully operational. It is a part of why I have spent so long not so much as attempting to find myself a mate."

Will's brows furrowed. At the same time as he felt a lump in his throat, he could feel something bitter burning him on the inside.

"You're not a fucking incubator, Hannibal…" he said. "That's not– You're not–"

He cut off when he heard Hannibal's soft laugh, seeing his mate look up at him again with teary eyes. Hannibal's hands came to his face again, his thumbs stroking reverently over Will's cheeks.

"I'm aware I won't have that issue with you, Will," he said with a smile. "Besides, you and I know better than to breed."

Will couldn't help the snort that came, his hands lifting to gently lay over the back of Hannibal's. His mate seemed entirely relieved, like a weight had been lifted from him that Will hadn't even known he was carrying. It was likely that nobody but him knew.

Neither knew who leaned in first. Their kiss tasted like cinnamon on a wood-burning stove.

Hannibal had long since fallen asleep in Will's arms, lulled by the sound of his Alpha's own deep purr when they'd finally managed to stop kissing one another.

Day broke slowly around their little home, the sun gracing the curtains and draping smoothly over the lovers as they lay sleeping. The air outside was slightly frigid, just enough for a spring morning, dew still hanging on the blades of grass.

Unfortunately, neither of them would get to notice much of it.

Will's eyes snapped open from the first bark of one of his dogs, and he was upright in bed by the time the cacophony of the rest began.

Hannibal's head lifted, too, actually somewhat startled, unused to being awoken by such noise.

"Will…?"

Will was out of bed by the time his name was called, throwing on his t-shirt and boxers as fast as he could. "Stay here, Hannibal."

"Will–"

"Stay here!"

Will yanked up a set of sweatpants for good measure, rushing out the door. He knew that Hannibal would *not* particularly enjoy being left inside, much less with the implication that he should stay out of whatever danger could be happening, but every one of Will's instincts

burned inside of him, telling him that something was threatening his Omega outside of their home.

It wasn't immediately evident what was going on, but someone had been there. The scent of another Alpha was strong in the air, enough to make Will's nose twitch.

…He knew that scent. Where the fuck did he know that scent from?

Whatever it was, it was *bad* . Like the strong vinegary scent of professional cleaning products, and the metal of medical equipment. Right now, it all smelled like *rust* .

A scent that, earlier the previous day, had been masked by the scent of the hospital itself, just the way that the scent's owner had masked himself.

"How'd your work turn out, Alpha?"

Will turned, his blood running cold as he saw the familiar jacket and scrubs. Almost pristinely white, just slightly grey, or maybe that was a result of the shadow that stretched over the side of Will's home, where the trespassing Alpha was stepping out from.

Will felt as though a lead weight had been dropped into his stomach. This guy had been *watching* from the window beside the bed.

That's what his dogs were barking at.

"Matthew, was it?" Will said, finally able to find his voice amidst the flurry of territorial emotions that were beginnings to crowd his mind. "You know you shouldn't be here."

"Hey, man, relax," Matthew practically purred. "You've got him on a leash, don't you?" As he said so, he gestured up to his own neck, on the same side as Will's bond.

The urge to tear his throat out altogether came *fast* , and Will was growling before he even registered it. The air around them became entirely soured, with burnt wood and bitter plant notes. Citronella, Hannibal had called it.

Hannibal.

“You knew what was gonna happen,” Will said, irritated further by the amused little look on Matthew’s face after he’d started growling at him. “You wanted me to turn back. Why?”

“I *do* recall telling you why,” Matthew said with his smug little grin. “I’d hate to see you stuck with an Omega like that.”

Matthew circled around the porch, and Will turned to face him the whole way. Matthew was entirely relaxed, while Will was entirely tense.

“Why did you come here?”

It was almost making him feel ill, the way Matthew was ogling him as he stepped around. Matthew had the inherent look of a predator, and yet Will couldn’t tell if he was meant to be Matthew’s prey, or if he was a competing predator.

“Like I said…Hawks fly solo, and that's their weakness,” Matthew purred. Apparently, the answer had been *neither* . "There's no point to Alphas being at each other's throats when it weakens them both. When they could be stronger together… *Better* together."

Will could feel his hair standing on end, the instinct to growl rising up like bile in his throat. Everything in him warned him that this was an enemy, that this Alpha was nothing short of a competitor encroaching on his territory, threatening his home.

Threatening his Omega.

Matthew took a step forward, and that growl came out again, Will's teeth snapping before he could even consider preventing it.

Matthew stepped back, just a little, looking up at Will with a grin.

"There are those teeth…" he purred. "Listen. I know what that mark does to you, man…I know you didn't want this. You and I, we're not built for Omegas…Just let me get you out of this, alright? Let me do you that favor…Promise you'll feel better without that thing stinking up your house."

That *thing* .

Will snapped his teeth again, stepping forward off of the porch, growling the whole way, eyes locked on Matthew as the other Alpha stepped back with his hands up, that horrible little grin never leaving his face.

" ***Leave*** ," Will demanded.

"M'fraid I can't do that," Matthew said. "**Sit**. Let me–"

Will couldn't hear what came next. His hearing was blocked by his own blood pulsing through his ears, and white noise surrounding his world as he saw *red* .

The opposing Alpha's attempt at Commanding him had done nothing but fuel his fury further, to the point where Will could hardly register what came next. He knew that he had surged forward, and he knew that he was trying to get this trespassing Alpha *away* .

Of course, Matthew was not the sort to go quietly. Taking the challenge, he fought back valiantly, as though having a chance to prove himself, as though he would fight if this was what it took to get Will to *see* .

The only thing Will saw when he finally began to settle down from his rage was blood on his hands.

Will was frozen, staring down at his warm, sticky, reddened hands, the color almost looking black in the shadow while shining crimson in the light. Will felt exhausted, like his body had just been through a car wreck, and yet he could feel adrenaline continuing to course through him, the result of the scrap with the other Alpha.

Still struggling to properly breathe, Will finally managed to tear his eyes from his hands, looking down at what he was kneeling over.

Beneath him, now entirely still, was the body of Matthew Brown, his face nothing more than an unrecognizable, mangled mess.

Will backed away quicker than he ever had in his life, scampering backward across the grass until he was several feet from the body. His chest heaved with every breath, nothing but shock and *panic* flowing through him as–

"Will?"

He managed to turn then, looking up behind him at the porch, still struggling to completely return to himself. His hands felt as though he was losing feeling in them entirely, the only thing he could feel being the blood that was beginning to cool and coagulate on them.

Will could feel his presence before he could see it, warm hands coming around him and hoisting him off of the ground. He was like a newborn fawn trying to get situated properly on his feet, guided solely by the arms around him, by the gentle voice in his ear that he could barely even hear.

He could somehow still see as he was pulled back into the house, and he realized then how dilated his pupils must have been.

Will didn't process their movements until they were squeezed into the bathroom, feeling Hannibal's hands around his own beneath the warm water of the sink, soothing caresses as the blood was washed from his hands. Steadily, gradually, he could begin to hear the words his mate was saying beside him.

"Stay with me…" Hannibal encouraged quietly.

Will swallowed, his throat horrifically dry and raw.

"Where else would I go?"

It felt like a dream, feeling the towel on his hands, and feeling himself being guided back out of the bathroom. Feeling himself being undressed and redressed in fresh pajamas, and feeling the soft bed beneath him as he was pulled back into the nest.

With his hearing returned, he could hear just how loud his Omega was purring beside him, arms wrapped tightly around him while Hannibal was nuzzling at his neck, scenting him.

Though he was hardly paying attention, he could have sworn Hannibal had been smiling the entire time.

Will's breathing began to regulate at last, soothed by the purring of his Omega, the feeling of being wrapped in his arms. Will blinked a few times, trying to process everything that had just happened, feeling as though his head was finally clear.

He had just fought another Alpha.

He had just *killed* another Alpha.

He was laying in bed beside his mate.

And it was alright.

His breathing finally evened out, and he allowed his eyes to close. He felt calm. Somehow, he felt *entirely* calm. His Omega was safe, despite some bizarre Alpha's plans to ensure otherwise. Will had kept him safe.

He would live on. He would move on. Both of them would. A beautiful thing had happened here, a beautiful thing was *given* to them, and his Omega was nothing but a contented, purring ball nestled beside him.

He wasn't going to question why he felt nothing short of alive in that moment. He wasn't going to dare question the peace that fell over them, the adoring look in his mate's eyes, the way he seemed to fall further in love with his Alpha after the brutality that had occurred outside.

Will allowed himself to drift off, and he had a rather confident feeling that they were going to be just fine…

…And that maybe no one should have ever allowed them to come together if they knew what was good for the world.

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